

TOMPKINS COUNTY CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD
Bylaws

**Tompkins County Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board
BYLAWS**

Established as temporary by Resolution No. 2019-280 of December 3, 2019

Extended by Res. No. 2020-106 of June 16, 2020

Established as permanent Board by Resolution No. 2024 – 195 of September 17, 2024

Amended by Reso. No. 220 of 2025

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this advisory board to the Tompkins County Legislature is the Tompkins County Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory (CaSE) Board hereafter the ‘Body’.

ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the Body shall be to provide the Tompkins County Legislature with expertly curated information on legislative and regulatory initiatives, successful community programs, and emerging technologies related to energy, climate change, energy efficiency, and renewables, as well as climate mitigation and adaptation.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership: The Body shall be composed of eleven (11) voting members and one (1) Legislative Liaison, a non-voting seat, who will be selected annually by the Tompkins County Legislature.

2. Term: Each member shall be appointed by the Tompkins County Legislature for a staggered term of three (3) years expiring on December 31. The Office of the Clerk of the Legislature shall maintain a list of upcoming expiring terms of appointment and vacancies. The Office of the Clerk of the Legislature shall notify board members whose terms are expiring. There will be no term limits for members.

3. Selection Process: Candidates shall complete the appropriate application and file it with the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature for proper routing and approval by the County Legislature and in accordance with [Administrative Policy Manual: Policy 08-26: Advisory Committees and Advisory Boards Appointed by the County Legislature](#).

- A membership subcommittee of at least two (2) current members may be appointed as needed to recruit or select members to fill vacant positions and/or at the end of a member’s term. It is highly encouraged to recruit interest in the Body by the public throughout the year.

4. Residency: Members of the Body must reside in Tompkins County, and be United States citizens, as outlined in the [Administrative Policy Manual: Policy 08-26: Advisory Committees and Advisory Boards Appointed by the County Legislature](#).

5. Vacancies: In the event of a death or resignation of any voting member of the Body, a successor shall be recommended as soon as possible by the Body and shall follow the selection process previously stated in Article III Section 3 of these Bylaws. The Office of the Clerk of the Legislature must be notified of any vacancies.

6. Qualifications: The membership should be composed of representatives from diverse backgrounds and perspectives from a broad cross section of Tompkins County. Each member will be bound by the [Tompkins](#)

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County Code of Ethics.

7. Voting: Each member shall have one vote for official action. Action by the Body, except for amendment of these Bylaws, shall be by majority vote of quorum. Proxy voting and voting by email shall not be permitted.

8. Removal: In accordance with Tompkins County Local Law No. 2 of 2004, a Body member may be deemed to have resigned their appointment after three consecutive unexcused absences, for the purposes of the nomination and appointment of a successor. Absences caused by illness or by personal matters of importance should be reported in advance to the Chair of the Body, who shall determine whether the absence is “excused.” Upon determination by the Chair that three consecutive absences have been unexcused, the Chair shall report this to the Body and begin the process of replacing that member. If a vacancy occurs, the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature must be notified.

9. Ex Officio Members: One or more non-voting, ex officio members may be appointed to the Body by agreement of the Body Chair, the Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability, and the Legislative Liaison to the Body.

10. Associate Members: The Body may appoint associate members for special projects and to serve on subcommittees and working groups. Associate members may serve and vote on subcommittees and working groups but do not have voting rights on the full Body. Prospective associate members shall submit to the Chair of the Body correspondence (which includes email) outlining which subcommittee or working group they are interested in serving on and why they believe their contributions would be valuable. It shall be at the discretion of the respective subcommittee or working group whether to add the interested party as an associate member. Alternatively, the Chair, upon recommendation of the Body, may invite people with particular expertise and strengths to serve as associate members.

ARTICLE IV: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities of the Body and its members as defined in the establishing/aforementioned legislation are incorporated in these Bylaws, as follows:

1. To act as a resource to the Legislature, and the Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability, on matters related to energy, technologies and their impact on climate, and energy-related economic development planning and development.

2. To provide timely information about legislative and regulatory initiatives, as well as actions and programs initiated by utilities that may impact the energy sector and the environment, and to make recommendations with respect to how the County should respond, either through resolution and/or other lobbying efforts.

3. To provide information and recommendations about developments in sustainable energy, building technology, and innovative community programs that may assist the County in reaching the greenhouse gas emissions goals set by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act as well as the goals set in the County’s Energy Strategy.

4. To facilitate energy and climate change-related planning activities on a cooperative countywide and regional basis, especially where issues reach across municipal boundaries.

5. To advise the Legislature and Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability on when and how to assess the potential impacts of major energy and climate change-related County programs on the County’s infrastructure, financial and human resources, and Comprehensive Plan.

6. To provide assistance and recommendations, as requested, to the Legislature and/or assist and advise the Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability on the development of the energy and climate change aspects of the department’s work program and staffing, advising on the direction and priority of project activities, and providing proactive planning support.

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7. To assist the County, its departments, and other municipalities and agencies with specific energy and climate change planning tasks as directed by the County Legislature and/or the Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability.

Subcommittees

1. Appointment and Membership: The Chair of the Body may establish subcommittees, subject to approval of the full Body. Subcommittees are primarily focused on governance and administrative functions, such as officer nominations, membership, finance, and other aspects of organizational oversight. Each subcommittee shall be appointed by the Chair and shall consist of at least two (2) voting members of the Body. Subcommittees may include non-members, so long as the makeup of the subcommittee includes majority CaSE members. Subcommittee Chairs must be voting members of the Body and shall be appointed by the Chair.

2. Terms of Subcommittees: Subcommittees will be temporary in nature. Each subcommittee shall be established for one (1) year or until the assigned task is completed.

3. Reports: All subcommittees shall be responsible for reporting to the Body. Each subcommittee shall keep the Body informed of its meeting schedule, shall keep a record of its meetings, and shall make reports to the Body of its current and future planned activities.

Working Groups

1. Appointment and Membership: The Body may establish Working Groups to address specific content areas, topics, or projects of interest (such as nuclear energy, grid issues, or other substantive focus areas). Each working group shall consist of at least one voting member of the Body and may include multiple associate members with relevant expertise. Chairs of the Working Groups must be voting members of the Body. Working groups are intended to be flexible bodies that can draw on specialized expertise from both within and outside the organization.

2. Terms of Working Groups: Working groups will be established for specific purposes and may be temporary or ongoing as determined by the Body based on organizational needs and priorities.

3. Reports: All Working Groups shall maintain basic records of their activities and provide quarterly updates to the Body on their progress and future plans.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

1. Officers: The Body shall have a Chair and Vice-Chair. Other officers may be deemed appropriate by the Body.

2. Chair: The Chair shall be elected annually by a majority of the members of the Body.

3. Duties of the Chair: The Chair shall lead the Body by directing correspondence on its behalf, setting meeting agendas in consultation with staff, other members, and the Legislative Liaison, presiding over meetings, and calling them to order. The Chair may also delegate these responsibilities to other members of the Body. The Chair

of the Body shall serve as the primary liaison between the Body and the Tompkins County Legislature, reporting on the Body's work to the assigned Legislative Committee. The Chair shall see that an annual report is prepared and submitted to the Legislature.

4. Vice Chair: The Vice Chair shall be elected annually by a majority of the members of the Body, following

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the election of the Chair.

5. Vice Chair: The Vice Chair shall assist the Chair as needed and shall perform any specific duties delegated by the Chair. In the absence or inability of the Chair to act, the Vice Chair shall assume the powers and duties of the Chair. The Body may also designate additional powers and duties to the Vice Chair as deemed necessary.
6. Vacancies of Officers: If a vacancy of an officer occurs, it shall be filled as soon as possible in accordance with the regular selection procedure. If a vacancy occurs, the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature must be notified.
7. Executive Subcommittee: The Executive Subcommittee will consist of the Chair and Vice Chair, unless other members are voted in by a majority. Members other than the Chair and Vice Chair must be voted on annually. The Executive Subcommittee shall meet as necessary to act on administrative matters, including finalizing letters, resolutions, comments, and other correspondence discussed at a previous meeting of the full Body.

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

1. Schedule: The Body shall meet monthly at least 10 times per year at a specific time and place to be designated by the Chair. These meetings shall be open to all interested persons and be held at times and places (remote, hybrid, or in person) convenient for public attendance. A formal meeting schedule shall be established at the Body's annual meeting in February, after the Legislature Committee schedule for the upcoming year is known.
2. Special Meetings: Special meetings shall be called by the Chair or upon the written request of five (5) voting members of the Body. Notices for all special meetings shall specify the time, place, and agenda items, and be distributed in a timely manner. No business other than that specified in such notice shall be transacted at any such meeting except by unanimous consent of the Body members present.
3. Quorum: A quorum for conducting business, as defined in the Tompkins County Charter, shall mean a majority of the total number of voting seats of the Body as if there were no vacancies or disqualified voting members. Virtual attendance shall count toward quorum.
4. Parliamentary Authority: Parliamentary authority for all meetings is the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, revised, except where it is in conflict with these Bylaws.
5. Minutes: The Body shall keep minutes of all formal and special meetings. Draft minutes shall be available within 10 working days after each meeting.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments to the Bylaws may be made by the Body at any regular meeting, provided that the proposed amendments were read at the previous meeting or included in the agenda for the meeting at which action is to be taken. Proposed amendments will be sent in writing to the membership five business days prior to the meeting and a two-thirds vote of the authorized voting membership is required for approval of changes.
2. Amendments will become effective upon approval by the Tompkins County Legislature.

ARTICLE VIII: ADOPTION

These Bylaws, when approved by the Tompkins County Legislature, shall become adopted.